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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

EDITOR: D. HARRISON

Central Library, Manchester 2.

VOL. 52. NO. 2

FEBRUARY, 1959

Talking Points

News about money travels faster than news about most things, and all librarians will know by now that the Finance Committee of the L.A. have doled out to the A.A.L. an interim capitation increase of 1s. 3d. per head from 1959 (previous capitation has been 6s. per head). The Finance Committee also recorded their "appreciation of the way in which the A.A.L. has conducted its finances for many years, particularly in respect of its publication programme, as a result of which this is the first application for increased finance since the initial agreement in 1929". We have been knocking at the L.A. Treasurer's door for some time now and a 1s. 3d. per head interim increase (with a review of the situation in two years) is a satisfactory reward for our efforts.

"Books about the last war" are still constantly requested; the children of to-day, do not, of course, remember the miseries of war and are inclined to see it as a romantic episode, a dangerous attitude . . . " says the St. Pancras annual report. Do the things we read as children really have such dire effects on our adult attitudes?

The Greater London Division of the A.A.L. has debated with the Society of Young Publishers that "librarians and the reading public deserve better treatment at the hands of publishers", reports the *Bookseller*. The motion was overwhelmingly defeated, and reading the report, one is thankful that a counter-proposal that publishers deserve better treatment at the hands of librarians was not suggested! Unfortunately the *Bookseller* assumes the librarian-debaters to be the A.A.L. as a whole, and not just the G.L.D. Now who gave them that impression . . . ?

The Brophy's penny argument—that authors should benefit one penny per library issue of their books—has been rolling around now for some years. Librarians as a whole have repudiated it, but it might at least make book-selectors think twice before benefiting the author of works of dubious value to the amount specified by Mr. Brophy.

How keen are we on our professional meetings? Arguments for time off to attend are considered justifiable in an enlightened age—an age moreover in which we need all the weapons in the armoury to encourage young librarians to go to meetings. Yet the time-off-to-attend school are often those whose chief aim is an afternoon away from the drudgery of their library. Poor attendances at recent Sunday meetings have underlined the impression that professional affairs are a long way behind on our list of spare time activities.

"Filmed books and Plays" is surely one of the most practical of our bibliographical aids. The reader who has seen the film and wants to

read the book would be a positive menace if we didn't have it—and now and then contrives to be a menace in spite of it! The third supplement (*Edited by A. G. S. Enser, Grafton, 8s. 6d.*) covers films made from 1955 to 1957 and includes a few earlier omissions.

Love Story Writers is one of Islington's latest booklists. Some may be sceptical as to the value of many of the entries; others may feel that those who use the list to search for "cheap and sloppies" may be "led on" to something better. This "leading-on" of borrowers to improve themselves should not be overemphasised; there are some who have a level of reading beyond which they are unable to venture. There are, however, others whose sub-standard reading is a habit which, like other habits, can be broken.

A.A.L. CORRESPONDENCE COURSES.

REVISION COURSES, MARCH-JUNE, 1959.

A limited number of *Registration* and *Final* courses will be available for the session March-June. These short period courses are reserved exclusively for those students who have already sat the examination in the subjects required.

The closing date for application is *20th February*: it must be emphasised that after this date no application will be considered. Overseas students are ineligible.

FULL LENGTH COURSES.

Application for *F.P.E.*, *Registration* and *Final* courses beginning Spring 1959 must be completed and returned by *28th February*. Full particulars of the courses offered are given in the current edition of the *Student's Handbook*.

FORMS, FEES AND ENQUIRIES.

Application for forms must be accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes and should be sent to the A.A.L. Hon. Education and Sales Officer, Mr. J. S. Davey, F.L.A., 49, Halstead Gardens, Winchmore Hill, London, N.21. The fee for each course, both revision and full-length, is £3 10s. 0d. Students outside Europe taking full-length courses are charged 10s. extra for each course.

Index, 1958

The Index to the 1958 volume of the *Assistant Librarian* has now been issued to all subscribers. Other readers requiring a copy of the Index should apply to J. S. Davey, Esq., 49, Halstead Gardens, Winchmore Hill, London, N.21, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

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by Ian H. Wilkes, *Barking Public Libraries*

So, young man, you want to be a librarian. Very commendable: an altruistic profession, but—have you considered the emoluments that you can reasonably expect to command? How much better to enter commerce, my boy, where you can earn the salary you are worth! Or go into a bank; nice steady job, nice steady rise and security—if that is what you want—easier hours, too. Or the teaching profession is better paid and has longer holidays.

You are still intent on being a librarian? Well, from the depths of my experience I can let you have a few facts. You must understand that you get paid on what is known as the General or Higher General Division Scale when you begin as a librarian, and progress to the Administrative, Professional and Technical Grades as you become qualified. The lowest of the A.P.T. Grades is I, and you might be lucky enough to raise yourself to this after you have gained just one part of your Registration Exam., as there is a dearth of Grade I assistants, while there is a superabundance of posts. However, choose your Grade I post with care as you will possibly be in it for the rest of your working life: this is the main reason why I cannot recommend you, young man, to be a librarian, for the maximum pay on that Grade is £725—which hardly compares with other professionals.

To give you a better grasp of the situation, I have compiled a list of all the jobs for librarians advertised in four months' issues of *The Times Literary Supplement*—which is a paper every good librarian spends 6d. on each week for the back pages.

During the four months there were 164 jobs advertised on Grade I, 23 on Grade II, 8 on Grade III, and 2 on Grade IV: I have not taken this any further up the hierarchy as the positions get even fewer.

The 164 posts offer plenty of variety, so if the prospect of the bottleneck at the next step up does not appal you, you can take your pick; there are a number of anomalies—or so it would seem—the numbers being made up of 29 posts for branch librarians and 4 for branch supervisors; 9 for reference assistants and 5 for reference librarians; 6 for assistant children's librarians, and 16 for children's librarians; 1 was for an assistant in a college library and 4 were for college librarians. There were also 46 assorted posts for "Senior Assistants", 18 mobile librarians, 16 jobs at various County Headquarters, and 7 cataloguers. Two libraries were asking for a Chief Librarian on Grade I.

The difficult step is to Grade II (two posts, 1 as college librarian, and 1 at a County H.Q., were Grade I/II). Of the 23 advertised, 7 were at County Headquarters, 4 were in college libraries, 3 were in the reference section of large authorities, 2 were for cataloguers, 2 were for librarians-in-charge of the lending library, 1 was for a children's librarian. One city offers its Deputy Grade II, and two Boroughs want their Borough Librarian at that price.

One Borough Librarian and one Branch Librarian are at Grade II/III.

On Grade III, we find 2 district librarians, 1 reference librarian, 2 chief assistants, 1 City Librarian and 2 Borough Librarians.

Two Deputy Borough Librarians grace Grade IV.

Surely you see, my child, that there are other spheres of endeavour

open to you that must offer more scope towards the top. Be a journalist, a publisher, an accountant, a bookmaker, a soldier—but do not be a librarian.

Have you any other questions, my boy, before I go?

Why am I a librarian?

Well, I don't really know—you never know what will turn up, I suppose, but fundamentally, I just like the work!

FLYING SQUAD

An experiment in mobile exhibitions

by B. W. Tuck

Essex County Library

There is nothing particularly original in the conception of arranging exhibitions of books to be held outside library premises. Such exhibitions, however, tend to be large displays of general books, tied to talks and discussions, and extending for as much as a week.

This type of exhibition, however, does not really preach to the unconverted. Book displays on such a scale usually attract regular readers and those who normally use the services the library offers. What was needed, we felt, was a demonstration of the scope of the stock of the library, aimed at a particular group of people, many of whom might not be members of the library.

Local clubs and societies were therefore approached and advised that any display or exhibition which they arranged might well be implemented with a collection of books on relevant topics, loaned together with stands and display material. This idea was well received, and several requests for such a service emanated. In order to minimise the amount of staff time needed to mount such displays, it was decided to construct a number of stands for displaying books which would be portable, and yet make the library independent of tables or other furniture borrowed on the site. Experience had shown that the space available on such occasions varied enormously—from large halls capable of holding many free-standing units, to odd corners where only wall-space or a window sill was available.

When considering the type of stand to construct, certain basic essentials were borne in mind. The stands must be of professional appearance, be easily assembled on the site, be portable and occupy the minimum of space when knocked down for storage. In addition it was essential that when built, the time needed to "dress" the unit should be kept as short as possible.

Two main types of stand were therefore designed and built. One was for use where only wall space was available, and the other was a double-sided island stand five feet long. This latter was designed so that a deep shelf, apron front and kicking panel could be quickly attached with concealed bolts and wing-nuts. This could be used when it was found desirable to display the maximum number of books, or omitted when space was limited. Neither type of stand cost more than three pounds for material, perforated and coloured hardboard being the main ingredients. Either stand can be lifted single-handed.

Subsequently a further unit was built, designed around the commercial "room divider". This design of vertical alloy tubing, with light

shelves and swinging display panels, is illuminated from the top, and can be eight feet long and single-sided, or a four foot island unit. When stored it consists of units no larger than six feet by two feet. It is very flexible in that it can be built in many differing shapes and sizes.

Laundry-type fibre boxes were then purchased and packed with the myriad types of pegboard clips available to-day, together with sellotape, Copydex, esparto board, stapling machines and other essential tools and equipment. Other boxes were kept available to convey books.

Now when a request for a display is received, the space available is inspected and the theme of the exhibition considered and display material prepared. Simplicity is the keynote, and nothing which cannot be prepared in a professional way is attempted. All hand-prepared lettering is eschewed, and painted cork letters are used. Drawing pins, crepe paper and hand-painted posters are used discreetly, or, preferably, not at all. All this work is completed gradually, using revised previous material, as well as making new.

On the eve of the exhibition the collapsed stands, books and other equipment are transported to the venue, and quickly erected. Publicity material for the library, members' application forms and request cards are also made available. With the prefabrication described, large displays of books can be arranged in quite a brief period, and yet still look professional. The final demolition and removal seldom takes more than half-an-hour, and the basic equipment is carefully repacked in the prepared boxes for the next time.

The results are generally worth-while, if difficult to prove. "Showing the flag" is a long term policy, but it does demonstrate to the non-library user the wealth of written material available about his favourite hobby or pastime. Many of the books displayed are reserved, and the subsequent visit to the library to collect the book is not, usually, the last.

To date, displays have been prepared for local Flower Arrangement, Horticultural, Historical and Model Makers' Societies, Community Associations, and official organizations such as the Youth Employment Service, culminating in the annual County Show. The staff have learned a lot about public relations work and have done much to break down some ill-conceived prejudices held by some ratepayers on the approachability of local government staff.

Details of suppliers of equipment, designs of stands, etc., will be forwarded to anyone interested on application to B. W. Tuck, A.L.A., Chigwell Branch Libraries, 165, Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex.

Pot Plants and Posters

by Alan Bill

Essex County Library

There has recently been a lot of nonsense written and talked about display in the library. The absurd over-emphasis on this minor aspect of the librarian's work dates back to the unfortunate amount of attention paid to it by the 1955 A.A.L. Conference. The advocates of DISPLAY (the capitals are appropriate) seem hopelessly insensible to the practical objections to their ideas and unaware that many of their notions appear to be imbued with concepts alien to librarianship. To clear the ground I must make it clear that I do not consider the term "Display" to include such things as guiding, general notices and the tasteful arrangement of greenery. Nor, in my opinion, should the term be used when referring to

special exhibitions of books—these are usually found in glass cases with hidden lighting and red plush and are intended to show off the library's collection of art books, or local history material, or something similar.

It cannot be said too strongly that the ordinary users of a public library do *not* need to be bamboozled, tempted, seduced, encouraged or bullied into reading books. Most of them have a good idea of what they want (and the staff should be available to help them get it), and pot plants and posters, however artily arranged, will not persuade them to read books they are not interested in. Nor is there any point in making a fuss about books which are already well-used. A library was recently commended for having produced a "Display" on J. L. Hodson the day after he died: are his books so unpopular that they need attention called to them?

The public library aims at catering for an infinite variety of interests. It does this by a careful and systematic arrangement of the stock backed up by good catalogues and bibliographies. The proliferation of little collections of books under catchpenny titles found in some libraries is bewildering to the reader and insulting to his intelligence. Assuming that the library is adequately guided (and that is important) the occasional reader whose interest is aroused in some aspect of the world to-day does not find it very difficult to find the books he wants. He does not need to be confronted as he enters the library with an inadequate and ill-assorted collection of books under a banner which reads "Books behind the news" or some similar slogan. And the best place for new books is in their proper place on the shelves, not jostled together in motley confusion under "Recent additions". Another device of the Display enthusiast (I almost wrote "fanatic") is that of plastering the library with book-jackets—but Mr. Surridge has dealt decisively with that particular malpractice in the April, 1956, issue of the *Assistant*, and I need waste no more space on it.

The letter by Miss Wilden-Hart to which Mr. Surridge was replying, is a perfect example of the attitude which is behind the feverish attention to displays and similar gimmicks that I am attacking. She said, "Is it not our job to stimulate demand . . . ?" and went on to take the answer for granted. The simple answer is, of course, NO. Most of us have our hands full coping with the demands that already exist, and we know that were our resources more adequate, new demands would appear without the need for any stimulation on our part. The public librarian is not the custodian of vast numbers of little-used books which he must force upon reluctant customers; he is a harassed public official trying to meet the needs of hordes of readers with a stock which is never large enough. The librarian who finds that his shelves are full of books which apparently no one wants to read should ask himself whether the fault lies with the books or the readers—and I shall be surprised if it is the latter.

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More Timetables

by P. S. Morrish, Greenwich Public Libraries

"Timetables" (railway only) were surveyed by Mr. Morrish in the "Assistant" in December, 1957.

The documentation of coach, omnibus and ferry services in Great Britain is less organised on a national level than that of railway services. The reasons for this would appear to be mainly historical, though there is the additional factor of the volume of material to be organised.

From the days of George Hudson, the "Railway King," to the Labour Government of 1945, the railways were continually amalgamating into ever larger units, culminating in the British Transport Commission. This process, together with the work of Thomas Cook and of George Bradshaw (whose *Guide* first appeared in 1839), and the obvious advantages of through-working and connections, quickly led to a complete national documentation of railway passenger services. Omnibuses, on the other hand, are a more recent phenomenon. Their outlook has tended to be local as the operations of each company were originally designed to serve one or two urban centres and their hinterlands. Although there have been amalgamations and although the present major omnibus companies are divided into two camps, the British Electric Traction group and the British Transport Commission group (mainly the former Tilling group), this local outlook has persisted, no doubt because group control has been more financial than operational.

This local outlook is reflected in the lack of comprehensive national timetable coverage, and only recently have some steps been taken to make amends. First published in 1951, the *ABC Coach and 'Bus Guide* is reasonably exhaustive of coach services, though sketchy on omnibus services, which must still be sought in the timetables of the respective companies if fuller information is required.

The terms "bus" and "coach" are often used synonymously. Although the same vehicle can be used at different times as either a coach or an omnibus, there are subtle differences between the two. Briefly and approximately, it can be said that omnibuses run shorter journeys more frequently, the seats being unbookable and the fare payable on the vehicle. Coaches on the other hand run longer journeys less frequently and the seats are to be booked and paid for in advance.

Coach and omnibus services, like railway services, usually have at least two different schedules a year, though more frequent changes are not uncommon. The *ABC Coach and 'Bus Guide* accordingly appears twice a year: one issue for summer services, one for winter services. A summer supplement is also issued.

The arrangement of the *ABC Coach and 'Bus Guide* is clear and straightforward. After a place index, relative for the larger centres, coach and 'bus operators are arranged alphabetically, their coach service timetables being given in full. Only a summary is offered of their more important omnibus services, listing termini, principal places served, journey time and approximate frequency. First and last journeys are not indicated and in the case of infrequent services, only the total number of journeys a day is given. These defects make it impossible to plan in

advance from this publication, an omnibus tour in any particular area. As well as two general maps, one showing coach routes and one the areas served by each of the major companies, there are many smaller maps showing the routes of individual companies. These are not all to the same scale and some are only diagrammatic (those of Birch Bros. and Devon General services for example). A few operators have no map: Cumberland, for example. Fares are incorporated in the place index, but as these are liable to frequent alteration, they are only correct to time of going to press. No details are given of municipally operated omnibus services or of the smaller private operators.

For complete details of omnibus services it is necessary to consult the official timetables of each company. Their addresses may be found in the *ABC Coach and 'Bus Guide*, in the Regional Timetables of British Railways or in the *Passenger Transport Year Book*. Alternatively, their general agent for the London area, London Coastal Coaches, at Victoria Coach Station may be approached. The smallest local operators are only listed in the *Passenger Transport Year Book*, where complete information about municipal services is also only to be found. The *Municipal Year Book* does not explicitly mention municipal omnibus undertakings, though it does mention other municipal transport facilities such as docks and airports.

Some municipal undertakings issue timetables, in book or leaflet form, according to the extent of their operations, but where joint working is maintained with one of the larger companies, the municipal services may often be found additionally and more conveniently in that company's timetable as for example, Exeter Corporation omnibus services are included in the Devon General timetable.

Some of the smaller private operators are likewise accommodated in the timetables of larger companies, as the London Transport omnibus timetables for parts of the greater London area include the services of a number of small private operators. Some of the largest companies, such as Midland Red and Ribble issue their timetables in a number of parts, one for each part of their area, and so it may be necessary to specify the district required when ordering timetables.

The omnibus timetable is constructed on similar lines to railway timetables, though on the whole it is simpler. Normally only one or two routes are included in each table whereas a railway main line timetable may include many separate routes and extensive connections. Omnibus timetables do not give mileage and *a.m.* times are distinguished from *p.m.* times by printing the latter boldly, though the *ABC Coach and 'Bus Guide* and a few others do not observe this useful convention. The symbols referring the reader to notes are less various and most constant in meaning, especially those used to indicate the days of the week. While many rural omnibus services operate once each way on market days only, urban services, perhaps operating every five minutes for eighteen hours a day, may give rise to tables of unwieldly size. To save paper and to make reference easier, the tables for these more frequent services may be condensed by noting the first and last regular journey (plus earlier and later irregular ones) and between, stating "and every . . . minutes until" or "and at . . . minutes past every hour until . . ."

While the omnibus traveller can be fairly sure that a 'bus will appear at the advertised time, the sea-traveller is explicitly warned that services will operate subject to "weather and other circumstances": gales, fog,

high seas and abnormal tides soon restrict the least ambitious navigation. The documentation of ferry services is as erratic as the weather to which they are subject.

Essentially a ferry service is a connection by boat of two points more circuitously connected by land: for example, that across the Orwell from Harwich to Felixstowe is about one and three-eighth miles, while the train journey via Manningtree and Ipswich is some $37\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The directness of the journey by water is the *raison d'être* of a ferry. Although this definition would exclude services to the Isle of Wight or the Scilly Isles or the Hebrides, these may be counted as ferry services for convenience.

Motor vehicle ferries may be traced in the *R.A.C. Guide and Handbook* which lists nearly fifty, alphabetically by the more important terminal. Details given include name and address of operator, period and frequency of operation, charges and loading limits. It also notes "steamer services" to the Scilly Isles and the Hebrides and the service for cars by train through the Severn Tunnel. The *A.A. Handbook* also lists vehicular ferries.

The more important foot-passenger ferries are noted in the Regional Timetables of British Railways. Run in connection with rail services, though not all owned by the railway, these convey parcels, personal luggage and bicycles in addition to foot-passengers. Thus the *Southern Region Timetable* gives details of services to the Isle of Wight from Portsmouth, Southampton or Lymington; the *Eastern* the Tilbury ferry, the Harwich harbour ferries and the Hull-New Holland ferry; the *Scottish*, many services of the west coast of Scotland and in the Firth of Clyde, to quote a few examples.

Some ferry timetables are printed as tables, but many because of infrequency are arranged in "paragraph" form, giving a line of departure

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times against each terminal, with a note of the approximate crossing time beneath. Few abbreviations or signs are used.

The national timetable coverage of these forms of transport is uneven. Those sources for ferry services, which have been mentioned, manage to exclude most of the Mersey ferries and all the Plymouth Sound foot passenger ferries. The national coverage of omnibus services is thin, though there is here an astronomical quantity of material waiting to be organised. A good start has been made with coach services which the *ABC Coach* and *'Bus Guide* deals with in a clear and reliable manner. Until there is equally good national coverage in one publication each for omnibus and ferry services, the provision of travel information, whether by travel agent or by public library, will not be fully efficient.

Since writing "*More Timetables*," Mr. Morrish has left Greenwich for the calm of an Oxford college library.—ED.

Comment from the University

David W. Hope, Assistant Librarian, Reading University Library, comments on several public library topics which have recently appeared in the "*Assistant*."

Public Library Charges

I am amazed that, in reading numerous discussions of public library charges, I have encountered no complaint against charges for book postage. Such charges, made by some public libraries in respect of postage in one or both directions for books borrowed from other libraries or posted from the library to its own remote readers, cannot possibly benefit any reader by speeding circulation of books, as fines and reservation fees may possibly do; they penalise readers who need a stock larger than that of their local public library (or branch), and readers whose public libraries have the least adequate stocks are most likely to be charged postage. If public libraries are to be a social service available everywhere, the abolition of all charges for postage is vital. The public library service will be unsatisfactory until it equals that provided by any respectable university library, which both pays all costs of inter-library loans and lends its readers—lends, not merely provides for reference—works such as Singer's *History of technology* and bound volumes of *The architectural review*.

Survey of charging systems

May I remind those planning a survey of charging systems, that such a survey will be complete only if it includes the systems of university libraries? The system generally used in university libraries has two essential virtues: it will reveal immediately whether, and if so to whom, a work is on loan; it produces accurate issue statistics, for renewals are easily omitted in counting slips. If university librarians could spare enough time, it would be desirable to compare in detail the charging systems of university libraries and to devise a superlative form of the system. It might be found desirable not only to redesign forms to encourage borrowers to supply proper particulars including the accession number (not the class mark instead) and to facilitate filing for rapid reference by the use of papers of different colours for different classes of loan, but also to insert inside the front covers of books brief particulars equivalent to those wanted on the borrowing form. A weakness of

the system is that readers fail to choose the correct entry word, frequently writing the editor's name instead of the author's. Now that some university libraries duplicate catalogue entries, they might find it convenient to duplicate also a stock of slips for each book, for placing one or two at a time in the book, for signature by borrowers, the slips being replaced when full of signatures.

For the sake of accurate information and of honesty, I hope that the surveyors of charging systems will consider whether each charging system can produce accurate issue figures. As I explained in the *Manchester Guardian* of 11th October, 1958, the charging systems of many public libraries produce false and excessive issue figures, by counting as issues, renewals and even overdue (the latter as, for example, some mobile libraries which count overdue as issues once a fortnight, so that a book kept out six months records thirteen issues). Until all libraries record as one issue the loan of a work to a reader till he returns it, their issue statistics and national statistics, including them, will be false and unreliable as a guide to how much people are reading.

Posts at inadequate salaries

Does the Library Association mean to act against inadequate university library salaries, with maxima far below the minima recommended by the University and Research Section and the Association of University Teachers, and so help university librarians to obtain proper salaries and to help university libraries to obtain proper staffs? Officers of the A.U.T. say they are willing to help librarians, but will not act until the L.A. takes the initiative, in order not to tread on its toes. Will the L.A. take the initiative? If not, will it gladly let the A.U.T. do so?

University library salaries are chaotic, while conditions vary unreasonably, though even university libraries with conditions far inferior to those at Reading, are likely to provide conditions better than those in most public libraries. Indeed, social opportunities, long holidays and leave for conferences, at good university libraries greatly enhance the value of salaries. But this is no reason why universities should not secure the best possible library services by offering salaries to attract and retain staff or why the L.A. and the A.U.T. should not press for such salaries.

The Assistant and the Public

Despite Miss Buckwell's warning (*Assistant Librarian*, v.51, p.231, Dec. 1958), we cataloguers at Reading University Library, who work in the reading rooms, at tables piled with books, are frequently consulted by readers including new arrivals. Perhaps the blocks bearing our names, placed on boxes for holding books in front of us, attract readers—they may be accustomed to seeing such names in banks.

To Miss Buckwell's remark that: "An applicant may . . . because of his individual temperament, be quite unsuited to be a library assistant", may I add that librarianship provides a wide range of situations, each suiting one of many temperaments. A person who is miserable and almost useless in a popular lending library, with books most of which he knows nothing about, may be happy and useful in an academic library, cataloguing works in foreign languages and helping other academic staff and students. Another person might find cataloguing and answering inquiries in a university or a special library dull, yet enjoy being in a public lending library. Surely there is scope for qualified librarians of many temperaments.

Correspondence

Division of Staff

I am so thoroughly convinced of the theoretical desirability of division of staff that I am sorry to see the very real difficulties in its way either belittled or exaggerated. Mr. Ramsden, in the December *Assistant*, takes the view that because *whole-hearted* division of staff is impracticable *now*, division of staff is therefore impracticable in any degree and for all time in this country. I would agree that such whole-hearted division probably does require that professional staff shall be (a) graduates, and (b) former students at full-time library schools, and no one believes that this can be achieved at a wave of the wand. But in the August *Assistant* which Mr. Ramsden quotes in his support, Mr. Ferry concedes that full-time training should be "the *ultimate* goal".

It cannot be too much emphasized that *thorough* division of staff involves a fundamental reorganization of the profession, of which these are but two instances. Salaries of professional librarians must of *course* be increased, not only because we believe that to be our due, but also because the whole question of division of staff, with the increased efficiency which some of us believe it would bring, cannot be resolved until they are. The profession must attract both suitable graduates and suitable non-professional or clerical assistants, and at the same time provide an adequate salary differential between the two. At present it is cheaper to employ sixteen-year-old proto-professionals, complete with their five G.C.E. passes, than to find *suitable* clerical assistants for routine work. (We delude ourselves if we think of "good" (i.e. "A" stream) secondary-modern school leavers in this connection. They either have the ability to make a satisfactory career in a non-academic field, or can find far more congenial hours and working conditions in shops and offices than we can offer them in public libraries. The employment of married women, often in a part-time capacity, seems to me far more likely to solve our clerical labour problem).

The public library service to which I look forward will employ highly competent professional librarians, most of them graduates who have been through full-time schools, on more or less the range of duties listed by Mr. Houldridge (October *Assistant*, p.202). It will also, let us hope, be organized in such a way that their influence will be felt in even the smallest service point.

I should be happy indeed to find some of them regarded as readers' consultants, in attendance at certain hours only at small branches which are otherwise staffed by non-professional assistants. Meanwhile, as I hinted at the beginning, there remains the possibility of partial division of staff, while we are working towards conditions which will permit its whole-hearted introduction.

It is already possible, and not merely in the largest systems, to employ a small number of non-professionals on routine duties. Provided that they are not frustrated would-be professional librarians, they do not find the work irksome, and work happily with other members of the staff. I would add that my experience with part-time married women (in this capacity) has been extremely satisfactory.

A. C. JONES, Deputy Borough Librarian, Brentford and Chiswick.

The National Award

I was delighted to see in your December issue that Eric Moon is still taking a lively interest in our domestic troubles, and that he has managed to straighten out the tale of Mr. Sleightholm so effectively. As a negotiator with the Staff Side leaders of NALGO, Mr. Moon was able over a considerable period to assess the relative parts played by the Library Association and NALGO in the negotiations for a National Grading decision, and as his newly-appointed successor, I have no reason to doubt that the picture he has drawn is a fair one. My own experience on the Library Association Membership Committee is so far limited, but it is quite sufficient for me to endorse the view that this is for once a case where the L.A. cannot be blamed for any incompetence. The only comment I would add from my own more recent service is that the work of Mr. Moon and others is at last having effect in that NALGO would now appear to be treating our claim seriously.

Mr. Moon asks for an answer concerning the possibility of the abolition of the National Award, and this again is a matter which has received very full consideration by the Membership Committee. For a number of reasons the committee preferred the alternative of continuing negotiations so long as there is the possibility of a satisfactory decision. At the time of writing there is every possibility that some decision will be forthcoming by arbitration, but if the breakdown should prove to be complete, then no doubt the question of abolition will be reconsidered.

JOHN H. JONES, *West Sussex County Library.*

Are We Bigheaded ?

I have neither the time nor the inclination to indulge in verbal mud-slinging with Mr. Moon, nor do I retract a word of what I said. I would, however, like to make one point. The whole tone of Mr. Moon's letter is an example of the unfortunate attitude that we public librarians tend, unconsciously perhaps, to adopt towards our fellow local government officers. One thing that I have learnt as a branch officer of a large NALGO branch is that we are not alone in thinking that ours is the only important service in local government and that all other services should be subordinated to our function, for strangely enough our colleagues in other departments think precisely the same about their services; and who is to say that they are wrong? It seems to me that rather than talk of the "evasive incompetence" of our Staff Side representatives on the National Joint Council, we might perhaps instead practice a little humility in our approach.

MICHAEL T. SLEIGHTHOLM, *Leeds Public Libraries.*

Emigration

Comment from another emigrant

When I boarded the liner at Liverpool last June, I possessed only an A.L.A. and a willingness to try anything so long as I could get out of the rut in which I and so many assistants in Britain seemed to be stuck. Looking back, I can say with complete assurance that I have no regrets, and that librarianship here in Canada is, for me, a far more interesting and challenging career than it was for me in England.

The Canadian Library Association recommendations (that non-graduate librarians from Britain cannot be considered fully qualified librarians) is certainly in conflict with Canada's frantic advertisements for British librarians—here in Saskatchewan we are being paid professional salaries on a par with their own professional librarians, and in my experience anyway, the majority of librarians here favour certification on a more equal basis for the non-graduate British librarian.

The position in Saskatchewan is, briefly, this:—The S.L.A. realise that the number of British librarians holding a University degree plus F.L.A.—their equivalent of a Bachelor of Library Science—is comparatively small (not to mention the fact that many of these bright people may not want to emigrate as rosy futures will be awaiting them in Britain). Therefore a certification committee is being set up to discuss the whole problem of equating British and Canadian librarians. The results of this inquiry will, almost certainly, benefit the non-graduate British librarian both in salary and in professional standing.

Meanwhile, individual measures have been taken by the cities who have advertised for British librarians, in order to offer them a position and a salary comparing favourably with those held by Canadians.

Needless to say, my family and myself are enjoying a far higher standard of living in every way, not to mention a clean, invigorating climate—even though the thermometer is hovering around the zero mark just now!

STANLEY FIELDEN, *North Central Saskatchewan Regional Library.*

Suggested Standards

There is considerable division in Canadian opinion and many librarians accept the B.A., A.L.A., as being the same standard as B.A., B.L.S. (We might add in passing that the General degree required for admission to the Canadian B.L.S. course has no equivalent in British university education; it is considerably lower in standard than the similarly-named degree awarded by British universities).

There is an acute shortage of librarians here, and librarians holding the A.L.A. or F.L.A., can get jobs at good salaries in Public Libraries, although these may be in remote areas where the population is small or in larger towns where the possibility of promotion is often limited. However, the Ontario Library Association has now passed a resolution that the A.L.A. alone will not be recognised as a professional qualification after January, 1960.

Canadians have taken a great deal of trouble to raise the status of the librarian and naturally do not want to recognise standards which would be undercutting their own. Since the Library Association is in process of revising its system of examinations, we suggest that a committee be set up to negotiate with the Library Associations of the Commonwealth and the U.S.A. to obtain a basic scale of standards within the English speaking world. This might be based on the accrediting system drawn up by the American Library Association and accepted by the Canadian Library Association, whereby Library schools are visited by a board of three members of the American Library Association who see that a minimum standard of tuition and equipment is maintained. Could not an international accrediting system be developed so that all library qualifications would be recognised throughout the world?

With regard to standard, we would suggest that the true equivalent is as follows and that negotiations could be undertaken on these lines:—

British.

B.A., F.L.A.
B.A., A.L.A.
F.L.A.
A.L.A., plus 2 subjects in
G.C.E. at advanced level.

Canadian.

B.A., M.L.S.
B.A., B.L.S.
B.A., B.L.S.
B.A. or B.S. in Library School.

This means that the Library Association would raise their basic entrance qualifications to at least two subjects in G.C.E. at Advanced level. Perhaps the A.A.L. could consider these points and persuade the Library Association to do something constructive to alleviate the position of its members abroad.

MADELEINE DE LA HAYE, ANNE SEXTON, JOAN MORCOM,
University of Western Ontario.

No Mausoleums

The deal arranged between the L.A. and the N.C.L. on the one hand and London University on the other over the new site to replace Chaucer House, has one feature which needs emphasis: the design of the new building is to be by architects appointed by the L.A. and the N.C.L. In short, there is no need to emulate the type of architecture characteristic of the new London University buildings.

But is there any hope of anything better? Will the new L.A. H.Q. and N.C.L. building be yet another of the monumental monstrosities which are going up all over London? Or will the chance be taken to erect something really modern, adventurous and exciting? Are we going to be so dreadfully worthy and dignified that the new building will be architecturally a dead letter, or shall we build in the spirit that ought—and often does—characterise the library service generally? We spend a lot of time bemoaning the ghastly buildings of the past in which too many libraries have to run; no better example could be set to authorities of all kinds than a Headquarters building that has the spirit of Le Corbusier, or the UNESCO H.Q.

As a practical suggestion, the design of the new building should be thrown open to competition, thus giving a chance to young architects. We *might* get a work of genius; at the worst we shall avoid a mausoleum.

JOHN GILLARD WATSON, *Barnett Library, Oxford University.*

Service

I recently needed a particular piece of information about a group of towns in a certain area. I have never been able to understand why people do not turn instinctively to the local library for information and help—now I know. I wrote to the librarian of each of the towns on my list, and waited. Some replied at once giving me exactly the information which I required. Some sent town guides which gave me what I needed, and one librarian was sufficiently kind and trusting to lend me a book. Unfortunately, this picture covers a bare half of the libraries. One library sent me a town guide which made no mention of the facts I needed; one replied, "I am unable to give you the information you require"; no reason why or suggestions as to where I could get it; another one wrote after a month a long, rambling letter about staff holidays, and said she was having great difficulty in getting the information because the last town guide was 1948, and she really did not know what to do. Several never replied at all!

JOAN FIRTH, *West Riding County Library.*

The Pyramid

When will the Library Association recognise the need for a change in its method of awarding professional qualifications?

All learned professional societies with the status of the Library Association—i.e., with a Royal Charter, a distinguished patron and a learned President—have three stages of qualification; novitiate: a period of low wages, no status and menial tasks; Associateship: the journeyman completed in his apprenticeship, the executive of his master, the Chief, and capable of most of the duties in the institution; Fellowship: the period of acclaim, the recognition of the original and advanced worker, the doyen of the profession. Unfortunately the Library Association sticks to the outmoded examination system by which it limits the number of Fellows only by the pure boredom of taking another set of examinations similar to those already passed.

By imposing an examination structure of this pyramidal sort, it is necessary to debase the Associate's status by pointing out that the examination which he has taken does not fit him for serious responsibility. The Fellow is elected on his showing in an examination of a type so similar to that of the Associate level that he may feel that another layer and yet another might be added to fit him for the position of Deputy and finally Chief Librarian.

The Associate's examination attempts to cover a vast field of knowledge without recognising that the librarian's whole existence is based not so much on what he knows (neither the A.L.A. or the F.L.A. will compete with the graduate in his subject specialisation), but on what he can find out. Here the librarian is supreme and has even invented more and more intricate systems of classification so that his mystery may be kept intact.

Certainly, the general public has no great opinion of the librarian as a professional, since it can see no evidence of original work being required of a librarian. Even at Fellowship level the librarian is not required to think for himself to answer examination questions, but is intended to follow texts. Any examination for which a textbook exists cannot be described as one suitable for the conferment of the highest qualification of a learned professional society.

Most librarians, once they have earned the A.L.A., become something of specialists in their particular branch of librarianship, whether it be in a scientific or technical library, as a cataloguer or readers' adviser, or in any one of the hundred departments or types of libraries. Surely it would be far better for the status and confidence of the profession if the Associate knew that he was finished with tedious examinations and could on the strength of his qualifications concentrate on his speciality. To prove himself outstanding and worthy of the F.L.A., he might produce some original work in the sphere of librarianship. So much needs doing that the choice of subjects should present no difficulty. By this means the individual would prove his ability, the Association would gain credit for the promotion of research and the public would benefit by the extension of knowledge.

J. GARDNER.

Don't forget, Mr. Gardner, the syllabus is even now being considered for revision, and "Liaison" spoke in the distant past (July, 1957) of a two-tier examination system as being accepted in principle. But this was long ago; and soon you and I will be retiring . . . ED.

A Philosopher Replies

Mr. Selby, commenting in December on my notes towards a personal philosophy of librarianship, seems to consider me an irresponsible dope pedlar. This is a flattering picture for a mild librarian, but it is not true. At least, I don't consider reading to be an addiction, nor books opium. Nor would Edwards and Ranganathan think literacy a bad thing. It is because of the high amount of real illiteracy in their respective communities that they laid such stress upon the library's education function. I am talking about libraries in Great Britain in 1958, which is a very different community.

Libraries are the only public service in this country to dispense books (and the services based on books) freely and without charge. That is their unique function. All other functions can be supplied from some other source. Education through the schools, enlightenment through the B.B.C. and other media. But the special virtues and pleasures inherent in a book can only be got through a library.

I therefore think that the supply of books is the librarian's main function. This is a simple job which, for various reasons, we don't do very well. Until we can be sure that someone who wants to read a book can come into the library and get a book he can read we are not filling our most elementary function.

The operative phrase is "want to read." No one nowadays **has** to read. The habit could easily be lost. Yet I think Mr. Selby would agree literacy is still of importance. We are failing to supply the means to keep people literate. If Mr. Selby thinks I exaggerate, let him read the paper given by Dr. Trenaman at the last conference. I don't want opium for the masses but rather bread for a starving man. My responsibility is not just to some of my readers. It is to all of them no matter what their standard of reading is.

ANTONY CROGHAN, *Science Museum Library.*

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